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ABSTRACT

Methodology and results of social studies assessment in Louisiana are reviewed, and student performance is compared to national and southeast regional norms. A total of 15,000 students ages nine, 13, and 17 were surveyed during 1974-75. The assessment instrument covered five major objectives of social studies instruction as identified by a community survey. Some of the questions were based on National Assessment of Educational Progress social studies items. Results show that the nine-year-olds are slightly below the national average and even with peers in the southeast. They score highly in commitment to democratic principles, but have low understanding of the human condition and government machinery. The 13-year-olds score below national and regional averages. Comprehension of governmental apparatus and commitment to democratic principles are both low. The 17-year-olds, also below national and regional averages, have a good understanding of the human condition and the workings of government. However, they have difficulty in reaching conclusions logically. Charts illustrate comparative achievement by age groups. Additional sections of the report (1) compare student performance within state regions, (2) list percentages of correct and incorrect responses to specific questions by age group, and (3) suggest remedial actions for parish, state, and university groups. (AV)

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LOUISIANA
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SOCIAL STUDIES HIGHLIGHTS REPORT
1974-75

Prepared by
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The Division for
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SOCIAL STUDIES HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND LOUISIANA

In 1973 the Louisiana State Department of Education initiated a program to gather information on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of sample groups of public school children in all educational subject areas. Before this date, Louisiana could boast of no achievement testing program or of any other means of gathering knowledge about classroom progress. The establishment of the assessment program represented a major step toward improved accountability for the state's elementary and secondary schools. Since a basic goal of the State Department is to effect qualitative improvements in our schools, particularly in the areas of curriculum and instruction, an educational assessment, with its unique ability to pinpoint areas of strength and deficiency, offers the most effective way to diagnose curricular ills and to suggest necessary remedies.

The Louisiana Assessment program was modeled after the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project of the Education Commission of the States which began in

1969. The major goals of the national program are twofold: to make available the first census-like data on the educational attainments of young Americans; and to measure any growth or decline that takes place in selected aspects of educational attainments of young Americans in certain subject areas. The NAEP program is now into its second cycle of assessment, as Figure 1 indicates:

Figure 1

NAEP Assessment Cycle

CYCLE 1	
March, 1969 - February, 1970	Science, Writing, Citizenship
October, 1970 - August, 1971	Reading, Literature
October, 1971 - August, 1972	Music, Social Studies
October, 1972 - August, 1973	Math, Science (Second Assessment)
October, 1973 - August, 1974	Writing (Second Assessment), Career & Occupational Development
October, 1974 - August, 1975	Citizenship (Second Assessment), Art

CYCLE 2	
October, 1975 - August, 1976	Reading, Literature (Second Assessment)
October, 1976 - August, 1977	Music, Social Studies (Second Assessment)
October, 1977 - August, 1978	Math (Second Assessment), Science (Third Assessment)
October, 1978 - August, 1979	Writing (Third Assessment), Career & Occupational Development (Second Assessment)
October, 1979 - August, 1980	Citizenship (Third Assessment) Art (Second Assessment)

Until the National Assessment was begun, billions of dollars were being spent on education in the United States--on buildings, on teacher salaries, on curriculum planning--but very little was known about the effectiveness of this expenditure. National Assessment was conceived as a device for gathering information that will help legislators, educators, and other decision-makers in the overall objective of improving the educational experience of America's youth. It is the first and only effort to obtain dependable and complete achievement data from school population groups on a national basis in a uniform, scientific manner. The goals of the Louisiana Assessment program differ only in their geographic scope.

The first statewide assessment during the 1973-74 school year was conducted in the area of reading, and the results of that assessment have been published.[1] With a view toward amassing data on all instructional areas taught in the schools, mathematics and social studies were assessed during 1974-75. This document contains a summary of the results in social studies.

A clear understanding of the meaning and goals of assessment is required in order to interpret the information contained

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[1]State Department of Education of Louisiana: 1974, Louisiana Reading Assessment, 1973-74 School Year, Detailed Results Report, Bulletin 1410.

herein. There is some confusion caused by the use of the term "assessment" in other contexts. In the minds of most laymen, the term is associated with property and taxes. Both educational and property assessment focus on evaluation. But while the latter evaluates real estate, the former concentrates on the minds of young people.

In the field of education, assessment must be distinguished from other kinds of testing and measurement. Some of its unique features are the following:

1. Assessment is not the common achievement testing program using standardized tests where individual performance is measured according to how other pupils performed. In this process students are ranked according to norms: thus, if Mary scored at the 18th percentile, and George at the 50th, George would obviously rank higher than Mary on the particular test, but we would have no indication of what each actually knew about the subject.
2. The assessment instrument, designed to measure knowledge and skills, is criterion-referenced, that is, pupil performance is

measured according to criteria (goals and objectives) established by experts in the subject field for each particular age level.

3. Nationally and in the state of Louisiana, those to be assessed are selected on the basis of a scientifically developed sample which insures a high degree of statistical accuracy. Each student is randomly selected from all eligible students attending the school, and each has an equal chance of being chosen.

4. Assessment uses age levels--9-, 13-, and 17-year-old, rather than grade or some other benchmark. These ages were selected because they are critical periods during the student's progress through the school system.

5. The assessment instrument is administered in schools selected according to the sample design. Pupils complete the instrument under carefully controlled conditions which insure a high degree of objectivity and

uniformity. In Louisiana, for example, 23 well-trained former educators conduct the assessment in a systematic fashion.

6. Although the assessment yields a body of data which shows what students actually know compared to what they should know, it performs a second valuable function. By cyclical retesting in all subject areas, a profile may be secured of progression by pupils at each grade level. This profile will reflect the effectiveness of established programs and highlight deficiencies in instruction and curriculum.

Figure 2 shows the schedule for the Louisiana Assessment program, which is subject to change as new and different needs arise. The goals of the program are several:

1. To inform the public about the state of teaching and learning in specific content areas.
2. To improve the course content of inservice workshops and institutes sponsored by the Department.

3. To furnish data for use in the revision of teacher certification standards.
4. To give committees on textbook adoptions information as to our needs.
5. To encourage local participation in assessment studies.
6. To provide data in support of legislative action needed to correct identified educational weaknesses.
7. To assist those federal programs which require needs assessment.
8. To provide research materials for the state's colleges and universities.
9. To provide concrete data about teaching and learning for use by educational master planners.

Figure 2

Louisiana Assessment of Educational Progress

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

YEAR	SUBJECT AREA
1973-74	Reading
1974-75	Social Studies Mathematics
1975-76	Career and Occupational Development
1976-77	Science
1977-78	Reading Literature
1978-79	Music Writing

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT: PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION

After the decision was made to conduct an assessment in social studies, the first step in the planning process was the establishment of goals and objectives, the criteria for the assessment instrument. To assist the program staff, an advisory council was appointed in the fall of 1973. It was composed of teachers, supervisors, university professors, and interested laymen. Such councils are an integral part of assessment programs at the national and state levels because these programs are committed to the principle of fullest public involvement in the process by which the state of learning in the schools is determined.

A list of 40 social studies goals and objectives selected by the advisory council was compiled in survey form and mailed to 2,601 citizens of Louisiana. The discrepancy model survey was designed in such a way that the results could be reported by the eight state planning regions and by six major reference groups: teachers, students, professionals, elected officials, parents, and commerce and industry. The larger the discrepancy between what survey participants indicated should be happening in the schools and

what they indicated is happening, the larger the need for schools to emphasize a particular objective.

The survey resulted in the establishment of five major objectives of social studies instruction in the state as follows:

Objective I	Schools should help every student have a curiosity about human affairs.
Objective II	Schools should help every student use analytic/scientific procedures effectively in arriving at a decision.
Objective III	Schools should help every student understand and be sensitive to creative and intuitive methods of explaining the human condition.
Objective IV	Schools should help every student learn the main structure and functions of their government and have knowledge of the major ideas and concerns of social scientists.
Objective V	Schools should help every student have a reasoned commitment to the values that sustain a free society.

The objectives have been published and are available upon request.[1]

The advisory council in social studies (see Appendix 1) worked with the assessment staff in the selection of items for the instrument, or test booklet. Approximately one-half of the test items were gleaned from National Assessment tests, in order to facilitate regional (southeast) and national comparisons. Figure 3 shows a typical page from the social studies booklet for 17-year-olds. Note that it is designed to be scored by machine because of the large numbers in the sample.

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[1] State Department of Education of Louisiana: 1974, Establishing Objectives Pursuant to Conducting a Social Studies Assessment in Louisiana, Bulletin 1408.

Figure 3

91. Some things CAN BE proved to be true or false. Some things CANNOT BE proved to be ture or false.

Read each of the statements below and decide whether it can or cannot be proved. If you think it CAN be proved, fill in the oval beside "Can be proved." If you think it CANNOT be proved, fill in the oval beside "Cannot be proved." If you do not know the answer, fill in the oval beside "I don't know." An example is done for you.

Example:
The earth is almost round.

- ● Can be proved
- ○ Cannot be proved

- ○ I don't know.

You would fill in the oval beside "Can be proved" as is shown, because it can be proved that the earth is almost round. Now you do A and B in the same way.

A. People from Mexico are nicer than people from Canada.

- ○ Can be proved
- ○ Cannot be proved

- ○ I don't know.

B. One religion is better than another religion.

- ○ Can be proved
- ○ Cannot be proved

- ○ I don't know.

STOP DO NOT CONTINUE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

An ideal assessment would include every child in the state at each age level. But economic and temporal limitations precluded such a "census" assessment in favor of a stratified random sample consisting of 15,000 students, 5,000 at each age level. The sample was designed to be an accurate representation of the actual school population in all respects within the eight planning regions in the state (see Figure 9) as well as in the state as a whole. It was constructed to insure that schools from each parish were included in at least one age level. A total of 390 schools in the state were used in the assessment. The sample was designed in such a way as to insure that the study would be as free of bias and as scientifically objective as humanly possible. Thus within the limits of a small standard error, if the black-white ratio in a given region is 55 percent to 45 percent, the same ratio obtains in the assessment sample, and the sample would be true for religious or any other educationally significant kind of grouping.

The actual administration of the assessment took place during 1974-75 in accord with the National Assessment model: 13-year-olds in October, 9-year-olds in January, and 17-year-olds in March. The Louisiana program employed 24 retired school teachers and administrators who were called exercise administrators and who actually gave the assessment in the

schools. The assessment used paced tape administration; that is, the whole booklet was recorded by a professional announcer, and the tape was played in the classroom so that the child heard the assessment booklet as he read it. Such procedure assured uniformity of administration and minimized the effect of differences in reading ability, thereby increasing reliability of the social studies assessment.

The analysis phase of the assessment process began soon after the first booklets were scored by Westinghouse Learning Corporation. The actual processing of the data and sample design was performed by Research Triangle Institute of North Carolina, under contract with the State Department. To provide some indication of the complexity of the analysis task, Figure 4 represents an actual page from the computer printed results on a single social studies item. You will note here not only the percentage knowing the correct response but also the reporting variables: i.e., other factors, such as region within the state, community type, school size, and sex, which seem to have a direct bearing on performance. The other two categories were collected through a survey conducted as a part of the assessment.

Figure 4

LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT, YEAR 02
SOCIAL STUDIES ITEM RESULTS, SEVENTEEN YEAR OLDS

NAEP Exercise 405011 Why Colonies Rebelled OBJECTIVE IV 2

Percent Correct	Standard Error of %	State Effect	Standard Error of Effect	Sample Size	
51.86	1.47	-9.74*	3.16	3085	Louisiana
61.60	2.80				Southeast
51.86	1.47	-11.64*	2.03	3085	Louisiana
63.50	1.40				Nation

Percent Correct	Standard Error of %	GROUP Effect	Standard Error of Effect	Sample Size	REPORTING GROUPS:
					REGIONS
51.92	3.00	0.06	2.86	355	Region I
48.87	2.31	-2.95	2.29	423	Region II
58.86	2.52	6.99*	2.74	377	Region III
56.04	2.91	4.17	2.88	355	Region IV
57.65	2.75	5.79	2.93	401	Region V
56.62	2.99	4.76	2.94	393	Region VI
49.84	2.64	-2.02	2.47	364	Region VII
42.03	7.22	-9.84	6.18	417	Region VIII
					COMMUNITY TYPE
53.04	1.82	1.18	1.68	1005	Large City
53.53	2.39	1.66	2.62	437	Suburban
54.79	2.57	.91	2.57	565	Small City or Town
48.31	3.58	-.55	2.54	1078	Rural
					SCHOOL SIZE
49.45	4.55	-2.41	3.49	959	Less than 500
53.54	2.04	1.68	2.14	853	500 - 700
52.35	1.63	0.49	1.66	1273	Over 700
					SEX
52.61	2.27	0.75	1.34	1445	Male
51.25	1.54	-0.61	1.09	1640	Female
					QUALITY OF S.S. PROGRAM
48.23	2.15	-3.64	2.23	609	Limited
51.67	3.69	-0.20	2.66	900	Adequate
55.16	1.67	3.30*	1.60	1393	Superior
					CURRICULUM GUIDE USED
51.42	1.90	-0.44	0.81	2016	Yes
51.73	3.10	-0.14	3.05	670	No

Figure 5 is the actual item which produced these results. In the upper left-hand corner of the figure is the identification of the age-level which is asked the question. In the top middle is the abbreviation which indicates that the multiple choice item is taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) list of questions. NAEP questions allow comparison between Louisiana and other parts of the nation. The words and numbers in the upper right-hand corner indicate that the item was used in both the 13- and 17-year-old assessments, a practice which, as we will see later, yields some invaluable information about what is being learned. In the middle of the figure is the actual item, which tests the student's knowledge about the reasons for the American Revolution. To the left of each response is the percentage which chose it. Thus, a majority (51.9%) of the students responded correctly. In the lower left-hand corner are the goal and content areas the item measures.

Figure 5

SOCIAL STUDIES--SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD (NAEP) OVERLAP 13, 17
OBJECTIVE IV (PART 2)

83. Which one of the following is a reason the American colonies rebelled against Great Britain?

7.8%	○ To abolish slavery.
28.4%	○ To obtain more religious freedom.
4.6%	○ To obtain the right to vote for all adults.
51.9%	● To obtain more control over what they might produce or with whom they might trade.
7.3%	○ I don't know.

17

GOAL: LEARN MAIN STRUCTURES & FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT
CONTENT: HISTORY RECALL

SAMPLE - ITEM REPORTING PAGE

In Figure 5, the "P-value" (percentage responding correctly) is 51.9 percent. Therefore, 51.9 percent of the 17-year-olds in the state should have reached the level of sophistication necessary to respond properly. Consistently low P-values indicate areas of weakness. The total P-value for each age level is the comparative agent through which results in the following chapters were computed.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT: RESULTS

Although the assessment revealed a large body of useful information, several caveats should be considered in its application. The Louisiana educational environment is affected by two unusual circumstances. First, there is an exceptionally large incidence of private education in the state, about 150,000 out of a million children, or 15 percent. This sizeable minority of students was not involved in the public schools assessment, although it is a factor in total educational quality. A second affective agent is the dropout rate. This can be expected to improve the performance level of Louisiana students, especially in the upper age levels, in comparison with the national average for two reasons: first, this state's dropout rate is higher than the national average;[2] secondly, that percentage which drops out can be considered the poorest overall performers.

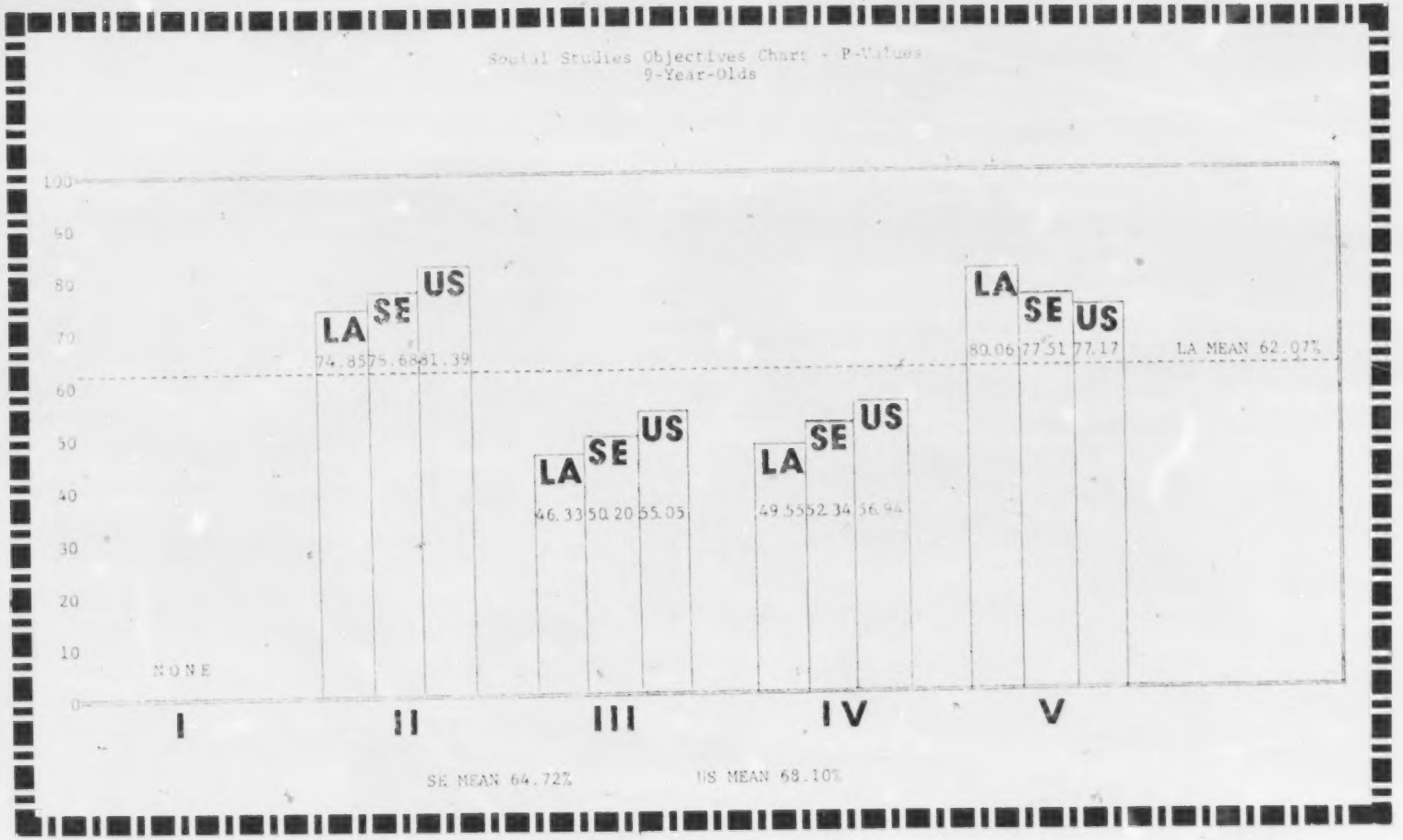
---

[2] Louisiana's dropout rate is 2.2 percent, or approximately 22,000 per year, according to "School Dropouts in Louisiana 1974-75." The comparable national figure, as derived from the "U.S. Digest of Educational Statistics," is 1.0 percent.

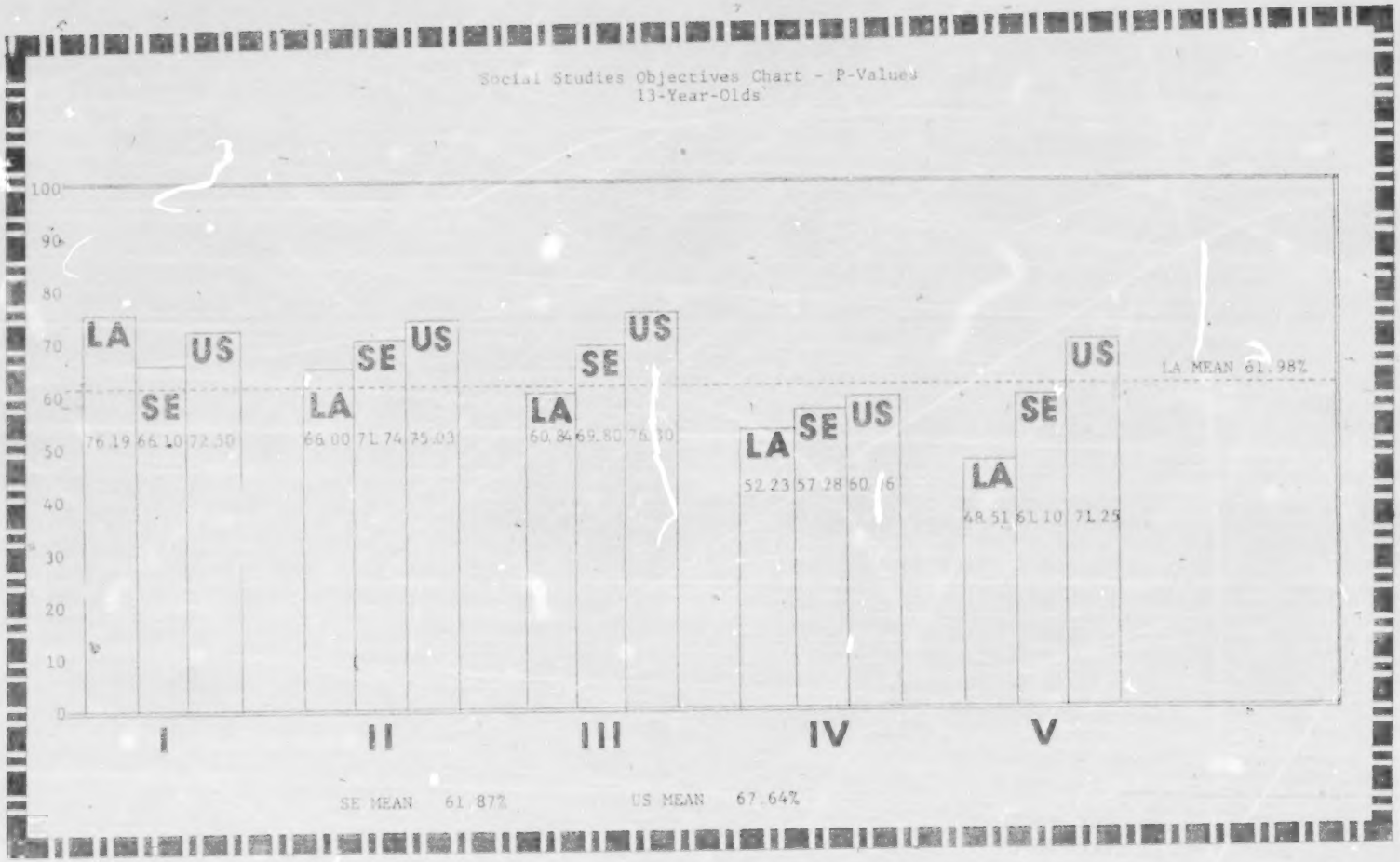
A comparison between Louisiana students' achievement and that of other children in the nation is revealing. Figure 6 illustrates 9-year-old performance abilities of Objectives II through V outlined in Chapter I. Objective I is more difficult to measure scientifically, although an attempt is made to judge student progress on Objective I in other age groups. Within the limits of error of the assessment, Louisiana 9-year-olds match the progress of their contemporaries in the southeastern region;[3] however, their overall performance is slightly below the national average. What is striking about Figure 6 is the uneven performance of 9-year-olds in the different objective areas. While students at this age seem eminently capable of using analytic procedures in decision making (Objective II) and score quite highly in the area of commitment to democratic principles (Objective V), their understanding of the human condition (Objective III) and of government machinery (Objective IV) seems abysmally low.

[3]The southeastern region consists of the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Louisiana.

Figure 6

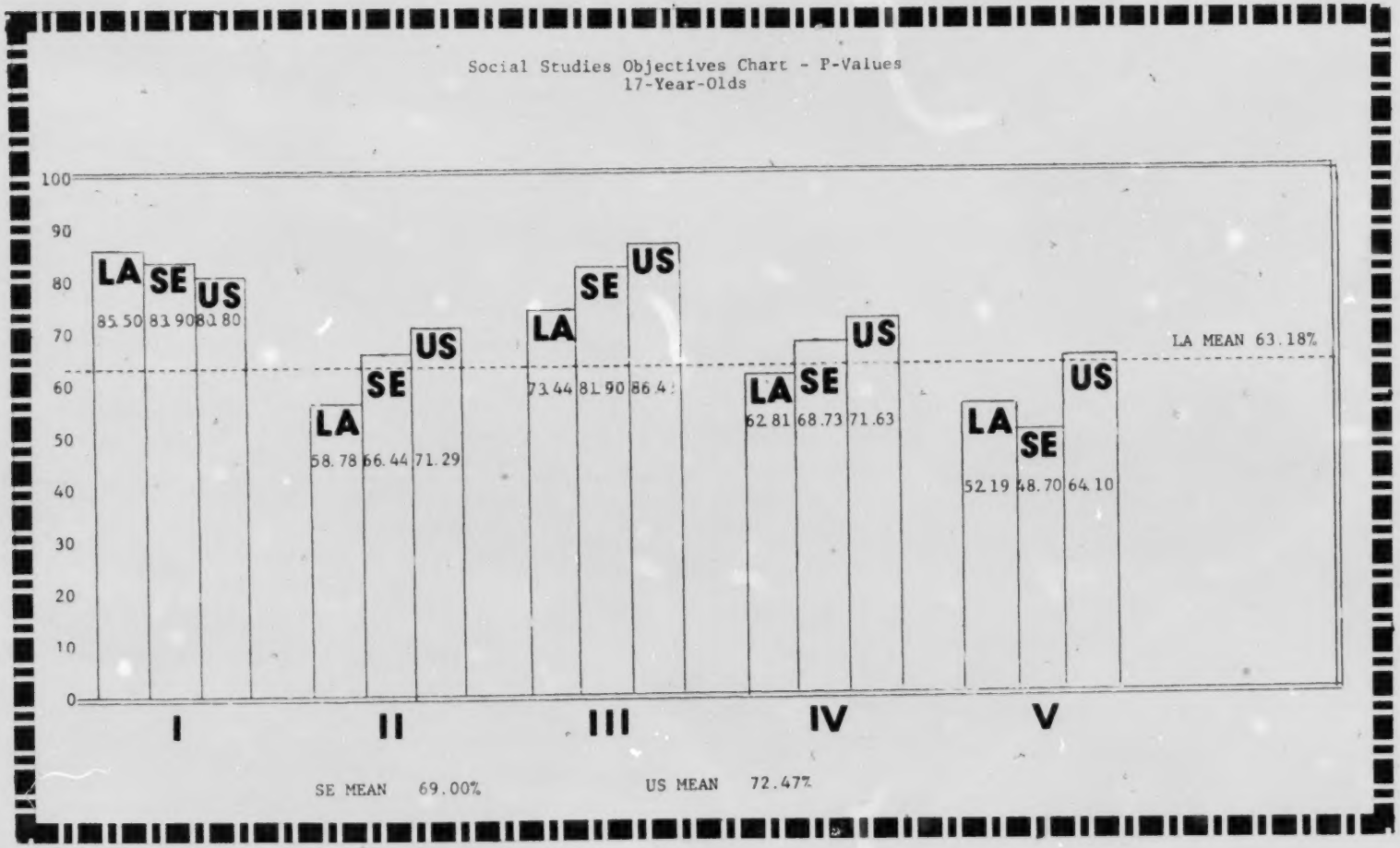

Social Studies Objectives Chart - P-Values
9-Year-Olds
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
LA
SE
US
74.85
75.68
81.39
46.33
50.20
55.05
49.55
52.34
56.94
80.06
77.51
77.17
LA MEAN 62.07%
NONE
I
II
III
IV
V
SE MEAN 64.72%
US MEAN 68.10%

As Figure 7 indicates, 13-year-olds in the state show a greater decline from the national norm than do 9-year-olds. Excepting only Objective I, Louisiana students trail the national mean. Also disturbing is the fact that they now are being outpaced by children in the southeastern region. A comparison of the two age groups reveals improved ability in understanding the human condition (Objective III). But, comprehension of the governmental apparatus (Objective IV) remains very low; additionally, 13-year-olds in Louisiana demonstrate a commitment to democratic principles (Objective V) not only far below the national norm, but also significantly below Louisiana 9-year-olds. In this area, at least, regression is clear and precipitous.


Social Studies Objectives Chart - P-Values
13-Year-Olds
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
LA
SE
US
76.19
66.10
72.30
66.00
71.74
75.03
60.84
69.80
76.30
52.23
57.28
60.76
48.51
61.10
71.25
I
II
III
IV
V
LA MEAN 61.98%
SE MEAN 61.87%
US MEAN 67.64%

Louisiana students nearing graduation demonstrate a significant inferiority in relative performance, despite a higher dropout rate. The state remains well below the southeastern region as well. Still, in some areas, such as curiosity about human affairs (Objective I) and in understanding of the human condition (Objective III), 17-year-olds do quite well. Also encouraging is a steady increase in understanding of the workings of our government (Objective IV). But, 17-year-olds, unlike 9-year-olds, have difficulty in reaching conclusions logically (Objective II). Like their younger counterparts, this state's adolescents are not developing a reasoned understanding of democratic principles. Whether this phenomenon is the fault of the schools or the result of parental or societal influence is difficult to gauge. But, in the area of social studies, these, obviously, are our children's greatest weaknesses.

Figure 8


Social Studies Objectives Chart - P-Values
17-Year-Olds
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
LA
SE
US
85.50 81.90 81.80
58.78 66.44 71.29
73.44 81.90 86.4
62.81 68.73 71.63
52.19 48.70 64.10
LA MEAN 63.18%
I
II
III
IV
V
SE MEAN 69.00%
US MEAN 72.47%

The comparisons among Louisiana, the southeastern region, and the nation, then portray an initial disparity which grows larger as students progress through the system. Further, they indicate that the objective of developing a commitment to a free society is not being met.

The assessment was designed to do more than compare Louisiana to other geographic entities. It also provides a breakdown of education within the state. Figure 9 illustrates the division of Louisiana into eight geographic regions. Comparison among these regions pinpoints weaknesses in social studies achievement.

Figure 9

STATE OF LOUISIANA

GOVERNOR'S PLANNING REGIONS

As revealed by the regional graphs in Figures 10, 11, and 12, there are small differences in social studies attainment in the state, although no simple geographic trends emerge. Region VIII exceeds the state mean at the 9-year-old level, but lags behind at the 13- and 17-year-old intervals. Region I reverses this decline, climbing from a heavy deficit in Figure 11 to relative parity at the 17-year-old level. Regions IV, V, and VI are consistently higher than the state mean. Still, as the regional graphs suggest, social studies achievement is remarkably uniform in the various regions of the state at all age levels.

The same cannot be said for achievement based on community size.[4] Suburbs and small towns consistently produce better social studies performance than do large cities and rural environments. Only at the 17-year-old interval do large cities exceed the mean; their better relative performance is due to the especially disadvantageous showing of rural youths at that age, who fall nearly ten percentage points below their suburban contemporaries.

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[4]There were four types of community: City - Schools located within the corporate limits of the following: New Orleans, Metairie, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Monroe, and Shreveport; Suburban - Schools located in residential or commuter communities adjacent to a city; Town - Schools in communities with populations falling between 5,000 to 35,000 and not considered suburban communities; Rural - A community or small town located in a rural environment, population of less than 5,000.

Figure 10

TOTAL SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE
LOUISIANA 9-YEAR-OLDS
(Vertical line represents Louisiana mean)

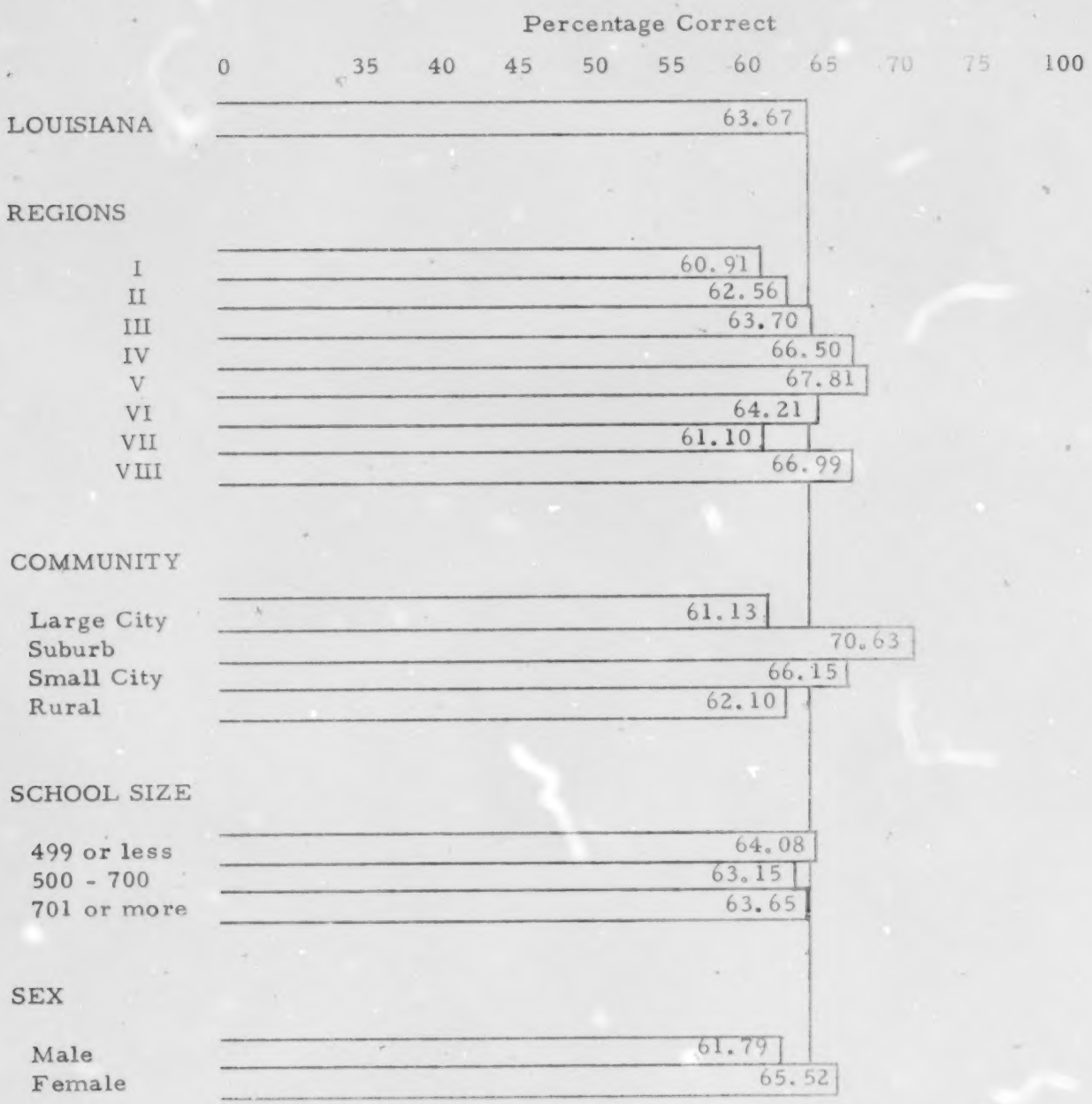


Figure 11

TOTAL SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE
LOUISIANA 13-YEAR-OLDS
(Vertical line represents Louisiana mean)

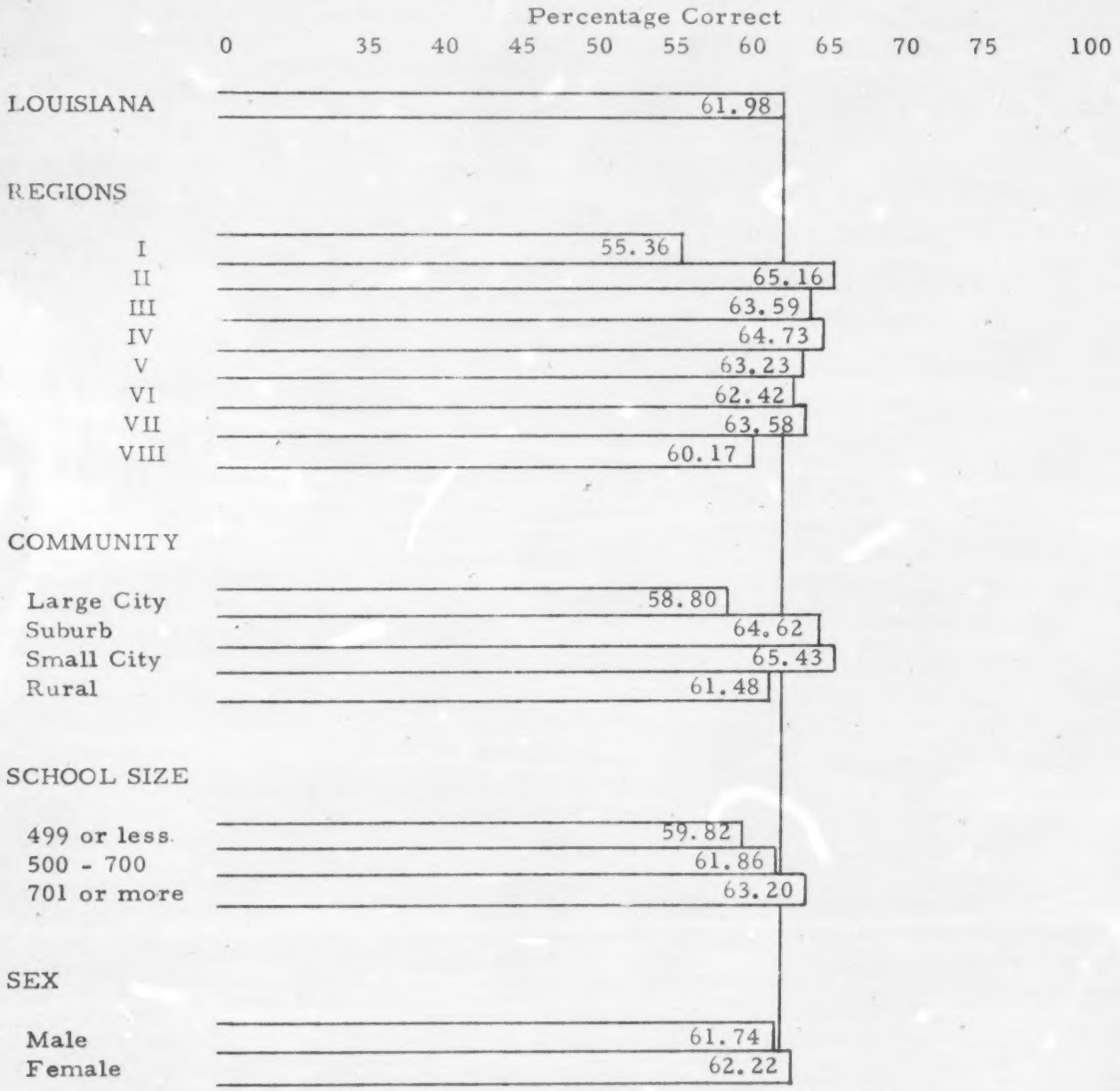
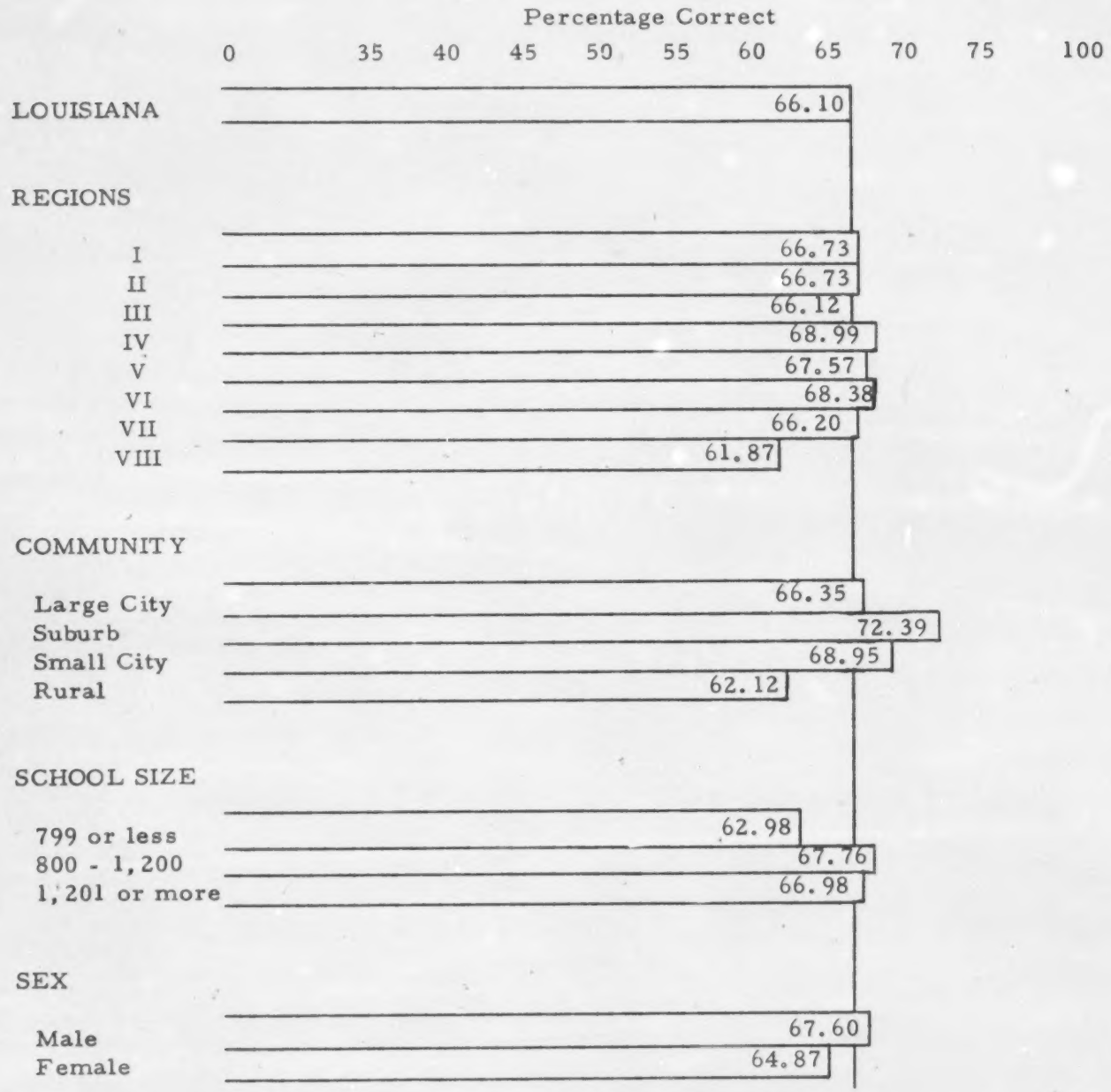


Figure 12

TOTAL SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE
LOUISIANA 17-YEAR-OLDS
(Vertical line represents Louisiana mean)



An analysis based on school size reinforces the poor performance of rural students at the older assessment ages. Whereas small schools encourage good performance in the elementary levels, smaller junior and senior high schools, typically found in rural areas, discourage exceptional social studies achievement.

A final variable is the sex of the participants. As the charts indicate, the girls initially outperform the boys in social studies. By age 13, male achievement is on a par with females; by age 17, the males have reversed the females' lead and have surged ahead. This pattern can be attributed to the growing influence of sex typing in the later school years.

Comparisons inform us about relative performance, but they tell us little about the real mastery which students should have in the social studies domains. Just how much do Louisiana students know and how does that knowledge increase with time? The following examples illustrate some of the abilities and limitations of students at each age level. Additionally, footnoted items reveal progress in the various aspects of social studies. These are overlap questions which are directed toward students at two age levels, or toward all three assessment ages. A comparison

of Figures 13, 14, and 15 discloses percentage progress for identical items. Figure 13, for instance, reveals that 50 percent of 9-year-olds know that one religion cannot be proven to be better than another. Figure 14 shows the comparable figure for 13-year-olds to be 65 percent, while Figure 15 demonstrates that 78 percent of the 17-year-olds are conversant with the subjective nature of religion. A mention should be made of the arbitrariness of assigning an item to the "strengths" or "weaknesses" column. Although any item correctly answered by 50 percent of the respondents was considered a strength, a score near 50 percent might just as logically be viewed as a weakness, since a sizeable minority has responded incorrectly.

Figure 13

9-YEAR-OLD SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE

A. Strengths

$^{\phi}$1. Seventy-four percent (74%) of 9-year-olds could understand events presented on a time line.

$^{\phi}$2. Fifty percent (50%) felt that one religion could not be proven to be better than another.

$^{\phi}$3. Sixty-eight percent (68%) could interpret a map of Louisiana depicting cities and crop belts.

$^{\mu}$4. Eighty-three percent (83%) felt that reading a newspaper was a good means of discovering events of the past day.

$^{\mu}$5. Eighty-two percent (82%) felt that an encyclopedia could not contain information on events of the past day.

$^{\mu}$6. Ninety percent (90%) felt that watching television news was a good means of discovering events of the past day.

$^{\mu}$7. Seventy-six percent (76%) felt that a globe is an accurate model of the earth.

8. Seventy-six (76%) knew that George Washington was America's first president.

$^{\phi}$Overlap item, 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

$^{\mu}$Overlap item, 9- and 13-year-olds.

9. Ninety percent (90%) could identify a problem which was the cause of a hypothetical confrontation.

10. Fifty-six percent (56%) felt that a dictionary would not provide historical information about Louisiana; while eighty-one percent (81%) felt that an encyclopedia would provide such information.

11. Seventy-two percent (72%) could choose which of four possible corollaries logically followed the statement, "Many people in India do not have enough to eat."

12. Eighty-one percent (81%) knew that a camel can go a long distance without drinking water.

13. Seventy-eight percent (78%) identified the Mississippi as the largest river in Louisiana.

14. Eighty-five percent (85%) could correctly use a table of contents.

B. Weaknesses

μ1. Eighty-one percent (81%) did not know that Columbus' intention was to discover a water route to Asia.

ϕ2. Sixty-three percent (63%) could not identify the major goal of the United Nations as preserving peace.

ϕOverlap item, 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

μOverlap item, 9- and 13-year-olds.

3. Sixty percent (60%) could not identify Canada as the country which shares the Great Lakes with the U.S.

4. Sixty-six percent (66%) could not choose one of four reasons why an item would cost more today than it did last month.

$^{\phi}$5. Eighty percent (80%) could not choose one of four possible actions which would least help a candidate be elected.

6. Sixty-eight percent (68%) could not choose which of four states borders the Atlantic Ocean, while an equal percentage could not choose which of four states borders the Pacific Ocean.

$^{\mu}$7. Seventy percent (70%) could not identify the role of the city health department.

$^{\phi}$8. Fifty-seven percent (57%) did not know that the statement, "People from Mexico are nicer than people from Canada," cannot be proven.

9. Fifty-seven percent (57%) could not choose a compromise as the best solution to a hypothetical argument; interestingly, forty-five percent (45%) felt calling the teacher was the best response.

$^{\mu}$Overlap item, 9- and 13-year-olds.

$^{\phi}$Overlap item, 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

Figure 14

13-YEAR-OLD SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE

A. Strengths

[φ]1. Ninety-two percent (92%) of 13-year-olds could understand events presented on a time line.

[φ]2. Sixty-five percent (65%) felt that one religion cannot be proven better than another.

[φ]3. Eighty-nine percent (89%) could interpret a map of Louisiana depicting cities and crop belts.

[μ]4. Eighty-eight percent (88%) felt that reading a newspaper was a good means of discovering events of the past day.

[μ]5. Ninety-five percent (95%) felt that an encyclopedia could not contain information on events of the past day.

[μ]6. Ninety-six percent (96%) felt that watching television news was a good means of discovering events of the past day.

[μ]7. Eighty-eight percent (88%) felt that a globe is an accurate model of the earth.

[φ]8. Sixty-eight percent (68%) could identify the major goal of the United Nations as preserving peace.

[φ] Overlap item, 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

[μ] Overlap item, 9- and 13-year-olds.

[μ]9. Sixty-two percent (62%) knew that Columbus' intention was to discover a water route to Asia.

[Ψ]10. Sixty-five percent (65%) felt that the state, as opposed to federal or local government, would most likely set up a central university with branches in several cities.

[Ψ]11. Fifty-two percent (52%) knew that the federal government regulates postal rates.

[Ψ]12. Sixty-one percent (61%) knew that the federal government establishes tariff laws.

[Ψ]13. Sixty-five percent (65%) knew that local government is responsible for garbage collection.

[Ψ]14. Seventy-one percent (71%) could identify which of four statements is most factual.

[Ψ]15. Fifty-three percent (53%) could identify Russell Long as a U.S. Senator from Louisiana.

[Ψ]16. Fifty percent (50%) knew that the Constitution contains an expression of our civil rights.

[Ψ]17. Fifty-seven percent (57%) picked a senator as the only one of four choices who is elected.

[Ψ]18. Sixty-two percent (62%) understood that industrialization involves urbanization.

[μ]Overlap item, 9- and 13-year-olds.

[Ψ]Overlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

[Ψ]19. Fifty-seven percent (57%) could distinguish between consumer items and producer items.

[Ψ]20. Seventy-two percent (72%) understood the inalienability of natural rights; while seventy percent (70%) understood that governments procure their rights from the people.

B. Weaknesses

[Ψ]1. Fifty-five percent (55%) did not know which of four choices was a reason for the American Revolution.

[Ψ]2. Sixty-eight percent (68%) did not know when the new Louisiana Constitution was accepted.

[Ψ]3. Sixty-two percent (62%) felt that industrialization entailed greater individual craftsmanship.

[Ψ]4. Fifty-nine percent (59%) could not identify J. Bennett Johnston as a U.S. Senator from Louisiana; forty percent (40%) felt that Edwin Edwards was a Senator.

[Ψ]5. Sixty-five percent (65%) could not identify the Supreme Court as the agency which rules on the constitutionality of law.

[Ψ]6. Fifty-four percent (54%) could not identify the Sahara Desert on a world map.

[Ψ]Overlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

[Ψ]7. Seventy-eight percent (78%) could not choose a reason for the founding of the Common Market.

[Ψ]8. Eighty-five percent (85%) expressed ignorance of the meanings of the words latitude and longitude.

9. Twenty-nine percent (29%) were unwilling to allow a person of another race to live next door; an identical number were unwilling to eat in the same restaurant with a member of another race.

[Ψ]10. Eighty-two percent (82%) could not identify the national convention as the nominating process for candidates for president.

[Ψ]11. Sixty-nine percent (69%) were unsure of or opposed to the idea of an atheist being allowed to hold public office.

[Ψ] Overlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

Figure 15

17-YEAR-OLD SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE

A. Strengths

$^{\phi}$1 Ninety-seven percent (97%) of 17-year-olds could understand events presented on a time line.

$^{\phi}$2. Seventy-eight percent (78%) felt that one religion cannot be proven better than another.

$^{\phi}$3. Ninety-six percent (96%) could interpret a map of Louisiana depicting cities and crop belts.

$^{\Psi}$4. Seventy-five percent (75%) felt that the state as opposed to federal or local government, would most likely set up a central university with branches in several cities.

$^{\Psi}$5. Seventy-seven percent (77%) knew that the federal government regulates postal rates.

$^{\Psi}$6. Eighty percent (80%) knew that the federal government establishes tariff laws.

$^{\Psi}$7. Eighty-two percent (82%) knew that local government is responsible for garbage collection.

$^{\Psi}$8. Eighty-four percent (84%) could identify which of four statements is the most factual.

$^{\phi}$Overlap item, 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds.

$^{\Psi}$Overlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

[Ψ]9. Eighty-three percent (83%) could identify Russell Long as a U.S. Senator from Louisiana.

[Ψ]10. Fifty-two percent (52%) knew which of four choices was a reason for the American Revolution.

[Ψ]11. Fifty-six percent (56%) knew when the new Louisiana Constitution was accepted.

[Ψ]12. Fifty-four percent (54%) knew that industrialization entailed a diminishment of individual craftsmanship.

[Ψ]13. Sixty-nine percent (69%) could identify J. Bennett Johnston as a U.S. Senator.

[Ψ]14. Fifty-five percent (55%) could identify the Sahara Desert on a world map.

[Ψ]15. Seventy-nine percent (79%) knew that the Constitution contains a summary of our civil rights.

[Ψ]16. Eighty-four percent (84%) chose a Senator from among four officials as the one who is elected.

17. Fifty-five percent (55%) could react to two opinions on the Vietnam War and identify their primary disagreements.

18. Sixty-two percent (62%) could successfully draw an inference.

[Ψ]Overlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

19. Seventy-seven percent (77%) understood the procedure for overriding a presidential veto.

20. Seventy-four percent (74%) could read and interpret a sample ballot.

Ψ21. Seventy-two percent (72%) identified the judicial as the branch which settles personal disputes.

B. Weaknesses

Ψ1. Sixty-seven percent (67%) could not choose a reason for the founding of the Common Market.

2. Sixty-seven percent (67%) could not choose the most precise of four research findings on cigarette smoking.

3. Seventy-three percent (73%) could not plot latitude or longitude on a world map.

4. Eighty-two percent (82%) could not correlate birth and death rates with industrial development.

5. Sixty-nine percent (69%) could not read a comparative graph; and eighty-four percent (84%) could not interpolate information from such a graph.

Ψ6. Thirty percent (30%) thought that Edwin Edwards was a U.S. Senator.

ΨOverlap item, 13- and 17-year-olds.

7. Sixty-three percent (63%) do not know the meaning of the term "interstate commerce."

8. Fifty-eight percent (58%) could not choose the reason for the Supreme Court's decision to outlaw prayer in schools.

9. Sixty-nine percent (69%) could not explain who appoints federal judges.

Cognitive progress, or lack of it, is heavily influenced by attitudinal factors. Seventeen-year-olds were queried about their perception of social studies and their value, particularly as they relate to understanding modern society. A surprising eighty-six percent (86%) "almost always" or "sometimes" enjoyed social studies. An identical percentage maintained that their courses required them to notice current events; and, eighty-three percent (83%) retained this heightened interest to some degree after the conclusion of the course. Most students (81%) discuss current events at least several times per month in their social studies class.

The last decade brought stinging charges of dishonesty and irrelevance against classroom activities. Apparently, the 17-year-olds of today disagree. By a large majority (81%) they think that social studies courses "pay enough attention to controversial political issues such as race relations, political demonstrations, and issues of war and peace." Nor do the students see this coverage as biased or dishonest. Eighty-eight percent (88%) think that social studies courses "give students a realistic picture of the way American politics works."

The only area in which the 17-year-olds expressed disappointment was in the governance of their own schools. Forty percent (40%) thought that students had little or no participation in

school decision-making, indicating that their practical preparation for participating in a democracy, surely a prime objective for social studies instruction, is in need of some improvement.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before embarking on a reiteration of the most significant needs unearthed by the social studies assessment, and recommendations for their alleviation, a qualification should be made. The assessment revealed a large body of data, dealing with performance at various ages, for various regions, communities, and school sizes in Louisiana. Therefore, this publication's title should be taken quite literally. It attempts, not to analyze exhaustively, but merely to highlight. More intensive research into the findings in conjunction with previous assessments and information gleaned from analogous public and private sources could only increase our understanding of the accomplishments and needs of our school-age children.

The attainment of Louisiana students in social studies is inferior to attainment by students in the rest of the nation. In this regard, students' comparative deficiencies in social studies seem similar to those in other academic areas. This broad inferiority indicates failures in the social and general school environments which are too sweeping for remedies to be suggested here. Our concern is not with general problems but with specific inequities

which can be remedied by improvements in the social studies curriculum, or in the preparation of social studies instructors.

At the most basic level of cognitive achievement, our students demonstrate a near complete ignorance of geography and economics, as elaborated in Figures 13, 14, and 15. Whereas the former is traditionally the province of elementary education, the latter is still considered a "new" social science. Some high schools offer economics courses as electives, but they are not required as a requisite for high school graduation.[5] The only courses required by the state are those unspecified social sciences in grades 3-8, and American history, and civics "or its equivalent." Perhaps the answer to our elementary students' lack of awareness in geography and economics can be traced to those courses required by the state for teacher preparation. Elementary teachers are required to complete one geography course as of 1975, and none in economics.

Another attempt to improve student performance is the requiring of six hours of geography and three hours of economics as a prerequisite for the certification of secondary teachers of social studies. These developments are recent ones, so their results could not be ascertained in this assessment. However,

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[5]State Department of Education of Louisiana: 1976, Handbook for School Administrators, as Revised April, 1976, Bulletin 741.

a follow-up assessment, designed to reveal the effectiveness of measures taken to improve performance, should reflect improvement in these areas as a result of these new requirements.

Attitudinal failures combine with cognitive ones to reveal a deep flaw in social studies education in Louisiana. As the performance by objective breakdowns (Figures 6, 7, and 8) illustrate, our children assume an irregular mastery of those aims of social studies education outlined on pages 9 and 10. At all age levels, students lack sufficient knowledge about the structures and functions of government at the local, state, and national levels. Also, they have not grasped the necessity of using logical analysis in decision-making. Most disturbing, some children lack clear understanding of the democratic principles upon which this nation was founded and endures, and the image emerges of a student ignorant of his rights and responsibilities as a citizen, unwilling to grant others their rights, and unable to perceive the injustice he inflicts upon himself and others.

More than other disciplines, social studies depend on the social environment. It cannot be suggested that steps taken only in the educational system will alleviate the needs of our children. Still, Figure 16 contains recommendations which, the Social Studies Assessment Advisory Council feels, will help the schools

acquit themselves more capably in imparting the knowledge and attitudes necessary for continuance of an American culture to Louisiana's children.

Figure 16

Social Studies Assessment Advisory Council

RECOMMENDATIONS

9-Year-Old

Parish Level

Immediate: Given the recommendations by the administrative staff, the teacher will give students the opportunity

1. to distinguish facts from opinions and relevant from irrelevant information;
2. to help students understand their relationships to others and their surroundings in order to explain the human condition;
3. to better understand the concepts of economics and the structure of government; and
4. experience situations with values that sustain a a democratic society.

Long-term: Administration should provide leadership for teachers in formulating a scope and sequence program in social studies.

State Level

Immediate: State Department personnel should conduct regional conferences to disseminate recommendations of the Advisory Council to parish administrative staffs.

Long-term: A basic scope and sequence program in social studies education in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes should be developed for grades K-12. This program should identify minimum objectives in these areas and allow local educational agencies the flexibility of adapting it to their needs.

University Level

Immediate: Preservice training in social studies methods courses should be conducted to help develop teaching skills in the areas of critical analysis and understanding of the inter-relationships and inter-dependence of mankind. In addition preservice should provide orientation to the concept of scope and sequence and its implications.

Parish Level

Immediate: The administrative staff should provide the opportunity for teachers to be made more aware of the need to teach current events and recent history such as the period after the Civil War. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of emphasizing geography (map skills, charts, and graphs), as well as stressing a special vocabulary for social studies. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to seek to correlate all the disciplines of the social sciences. A systematic scope and sequence approach to teaching social studies would include all of these disciplines. Inservice training of teachers stressing a variety of techniques which will motivate and stimulate learning is recommended.

Long-term: There should be continuing inservice training which will ultimately lead to more effective teaching and learning. A united effort throughout the parishes to coordinate and pool resources would be beneficial for both teachers and students.

State Level

Immediate: The Louisiana State Department of Education should provide leadership in the promotion of continuing inservice training and instructional staff development. The state should coordinate efforts with universities to improve preservice and in-service programs for teachers. Every effort should be made to see that schools have quality, up-to-date textbooks and materials.

Long-term: The state should provide a continuous cycle of assessment to evaluate student progress over a period of time. The Louisiana State Department of Education should continue to promote the development of assessment plans at the local level.

University Level

Immediate and Long-term: Assessment results should be made available to university personnel for the purposes of preservice and inservice to teachers in the social sciences. The teacher preparation program should emphasize studies in all disciplines of the social studies--economics, geography, sociology, political science, and history. College faculties

should work closely with school districts and State Department personnel in the development of teacher preparation programs. Universities should also make the expertise in their faculties available to the school districts for inservice work.

17-Year-Old

Parish Level

Immediate: The meaningful results of the assessment program should be made available in an understandable form to the rank and file teacher for examination and implementation, and in particular for inservice training of the kind required by House Bill 1100.

State Level

Immediate: Upon request from the parish the State Department should provide assistance to the parishes to bring about changes in the area of need, namely in instruction and curriculum. The state should also provide assistance in conducting local assessments.

University Level

Immediate: The universities should be asked to assist with the recommendations of the assessment program and offer special courses that parallel findings of the assessment results.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

NAME	AFFILIATION	AGE GROUP
Mrs. Leta Autrey	Teacher, Ouachita Parish Schools	9-Year-Old
Mrs. Lenora Cadwallader	Department of Commerce and Industry	9-Year-Old
Mrs. Gwendolyn Cason	Teacher, Caddo Parish Schools	13-Year-Old
Ted Cormier	Supervisor of Social Studies Education St. Martin Parish Schools	13-Year-Old
Alvin DiCarlo	Teacher, Orleans Parish Schools	17-Year-Old
Mrs. Catherine Duhe	Teacher, St. Charles Parish Schools	13-Year-Old
Dr. Charles Foxworth	Louisiana Tech University	17-Year-Old
Eugene Hanchey	Executive Secretary, Louisiana Association of School Administrators	17-Year-Old
Mrs. Gloria Harrison	Vice-President, Louisiana Education Association	9-Year-Old
Calvin Hebert	Supervisor of Social Studies Education Vermilion Parish Schools	9-Year-Old

Walter Martin	Supervisor of Social Studies Education Bossier Parish Schools	17-Year-Old
Dr. Huey McCauley	University of Southwestern Louisiana	13-Year-Old
Richard Morgan	Teacher, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools	17-Year-Old
Dr. Joe Parker	Louisiana State University	9-Year-Old
Kenneth Payne	Vice-President, Louisiana Teachers' Association	13-Year-Old
Mrs. Carrye Pitts	Teacher, Caddo Parish Schools	9-Year-Old
Mrs. Madelyn Wills	President, Louisiana Parent-Teacher Association	17-Year-Old
Louis Nicolosi	Social Studies Supervisor State Department of Education	Consultant

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ASSESSMENT STAFF

Dr. J Stuart Wilson, Director
Rebecca S. Contois, Assistant Director
Sam C. Pernici, Supervisor
Jimmie L. Steptoe, Supervisor
Stephen L. Delacroix, Supervisor

Appendix 2

SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT TIMETABLE

Preparation

1972	A decision was made to assess social studies.
October, 1973	Seventeen supervisors, teachers, and university personnel were invited to be on Social Studies Assessment Advisory Council.
November, 1973	Social Studies Advisory Council Workshop I Goals and Objectives
January, 1974	A survey of goals and objectives was mailed to 2,601 teachers, students, professionals, elected officials, parents, commerce and industry.
February, 1974	Social Studies Advisory Council Workshop II Finalized Goals and Objectives Selected Items
June, 1974	Field tested items.

Administration

Fifteen thousand 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students were assessed.

October, 1974	5,000 Thirteen-year-olds assessed
January, 1975	5,000 Nine-year-olds assessed
March, 1975	5,000 Seventeen-year-olds assessed

Analysis

November, 1974 - March, 1975	Westinghouse Learning Corporation scored booklets.
Summer, 1975	Research Triangle Institute processed data.
December, 1975	Social Studies Assessment Advisory Council and Assessment staff interpreted and analyzed data.

Dissemination

Fall, 1974	Goals and objectives sent to parish superintendents, schools, educational institutions, organizations, public officials, and educators.
April - October, 1976	Results reports will be released, staff will assist parishes with use of information.